

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 DOE-11 SOE-02 NRC-05
OES-07 EB-08 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
/098 W

-----038778 301513Z /47

R 300841Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1796
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION USNATO
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR
USIA WASHDC

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SHAPE ALSO FOR POLAD
USCINCEUR ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PARM KNUC NL
SUBJECT: NEUTRON BOMB

REF: (A) THE HAGUE 5508 (NOTAL), (B) THE HAGUE 5736 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: LEADERS OF MINOR DUTCH RADICAL PARTY CALL
ON AMBASSADOR TO ASK HIM TO GIVE PRESIDENT CARTER THEIR
URGENT APPEAL NOT TO PRODUCE OR DEPLOY THE ER/RB WEAPON;
EXPRESS THEIR GRAVE CONCERN FOR NETHERLANDS VULNERABILITY.
AMBASSADOR ACCEPTED THEIR MESSAGE AND REBUTTED THEIR
ONE-SIDE APPRECIATION OF THE ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

2. TWO LEADERS OF THE SMALL DUTCH RADICAL SOCIALIST
PARTY, POLITIEKE PARTIJ RADICALEN (PPR) CALLED ON THE
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AMBASSADOR DEC 28 TO ASK HIM TO FORWARD TO PRESIDENT
CARTER THEIR FEARS AND CONCERN ABOUT THE POSSIBLE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE ER/RB WEAPON. THE CALLERS WERE
REF. HERMAN VERBEEK, PARTY CHAIRMAN, A ROMAN CATHOLIC
PRIEST OF GRONINGEN, AND MRS. RIA BECKERS, LEADER
OF THE THREE-PERSON PPR FACTION IN THE SECOND CHAMBER.

3. THEIR APPROACH WAS GRAVE, BUT VERY LOW KEY. THEY STRESSED THEIR ADMIRATION FOR THE PRESIDENT AND HIS DESIRE FOR PEACE AND DISARMAMENT BUT FIRMLY STATED THEIR CONCERN THAT THE "NEUTRONEN BOM" REPRESENTS A SERIOUS LOCAL HAZARD TO THE NETHERLANDS. THEY ALSO LEFT A 20 PAGE LEAFLET SETTING FORTH THE PARTY POSITION ENTITLED "NEE TEGEN DE NEUTRONEN BOM," IN DUTCH, WHICH TRANSLATES AS "NO TO THE NEUTRON BOMB."

4. MAIN POINTS MADE TO THE AMBASSADOR AND IN THE BOOKLET WERE THAT THE ER/RB HEADS A NEW GENERATION OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS WHICH BY ITS EFFICIENCY ENABLES A MORE FLEXIBLE AND AGGRESSIVE UTILITY. THEY FEAR IT SIGNIFICANTLY LOWERS THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD AND THUS POSES A SIGNIFICANT THREAT TO THE NETHERLANDS. THEY REVEALED LITTLE APPRECIATION OF A LARGER UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION PRESENTED BY THE ER/RB.

5. FATHER VERBEEK SAID "WHEN YOU HAVE A SMALL BOMB YOU FIND IT EASIER TO USE. WE HERE ARE VERY CLOSE TO THE EAST, AND SO WE ARE ENDANGERED." THEY POINTED OUT THAT APPROXIMATELY 500,000 NETHERLANDERS ARE REPORTED TO HAVE SIGNED PETITIONS TO THE GON IN OPPOSITION TO THE WEAPON AND THAT THEIR PARTY WILL SEEK TO HAVE THE PETITION MOVED TO THE PARLIAMENT.

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6. THEY SAID THEY WERE SEEING THE WEST GERMAN AMBASSADOR AFTER THEIR CALL HERE. THEY BELIEVE THE GERMAN DECISION ON THE WEAPON IS A KEY ONE, AND THEY FEAR THE GERMANS WILL BE FAVORABLY INCLINED TO ITS DEPLOYMENT.

7. IN RESPONSE THE AMBASSADOR INFORMED THEM OF THE PRESIDENT'S VIGOROUS DISARMAMENT EFFORTS AND HIS PERSONAL ASSUMPTION OF RESPONSIBILITY EXPLICITLY IN HIS STATMENT TO SENATOR STENNIS. HE POINTED OUT THE US CONVICTION THAT THE ER/RB WEAPON DOES NOT LOWER THE THRESHOLD AND IS INHERENTLY NO MORE THREATENING THAN ANY OTHER TACTICAL WEAPON. HE REBUTTED THE VIEW THE WEAPON WAS AGGRESSIVE, SAID IT WAS A DETERRENT TO PREVENT, NOT MAKE WAR, AND IN ANY EVENT LESS DESTRUCTIVE TO LIFE THAN EXISTING SYSTEMS. HE LAMENTED THE DISTORTION OF THE WEAPON'S PURPOSE BY THE PRESS HERE AND ELSEWHERE.

8. THE AMBASSADOR STRESSED THE PRESIDENT HAD MADE NO DECISION AND THAT US ACTION WOULD BE LARGELY DEPENDENT ON ITS EUROPEAN ALLIES. HE TOLD HIS VISITORS HE WOULD REFER THEIR VIEWS TO THE DEPARTMENT AND THE PRESIDENT.

9. AS THEY LEFT, FATHER VERBEEK AND MRS BECKERS
REITERATED THEIR FAITH IN THE PRESIDENT AND THEIR HOPES
IN AND FOR HIS POLICIES.

10. ER/RB CONTINUES AS A PUBLIC ISSUE HERE, INCLUDING
A MEDIA FAVORITE, WITH SUPPORT IN MAJOR PARTIES
INCLUDING THE LABOR PARTY FOR RESISTANCE TO ITS
DEPLOYMENT AND PREVENTION OF DUTCH ASSOCIATION WITH IT
AS THE PPR BOOKLET SAYS. IT IS A MAJOR ISSUE OF THE
COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE NETHERLANDS. THOUGH PPR
IS A VERY SMALL AND IDEOLOGIZED POLITICAL GROUP, IT
IS TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDER
DUTCH CONCERNS ABOUT ER/RB AND NUCLEAR SUBJECTS IN
GENERAL. ALL THIS OF COURSE IS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE
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DUTCH "TRUE BELIEVER" PENCHANT FOR CAUSES, BUT IT IS
ALSO REAL.
MCCLOSKEY

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 30-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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